NATIONAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

BRUSH MANAGEMENT
(Ac.)

CODE 314

DEFINITION

Removal, reduction, or manipulation of woody (non-herbaceous) plants.

PURPOSE

- Restore natural plant community balance
- Create the desired plant community
- Restore desired vegetative cover to protect soils, control erosion, reduce sediment, improve water quality and enhance
- Maintain, modify, or enhance wildlife habitat
- Improve forage accessibility quality, and quantity for livestock
- Manage fuel loads to achieve desired conditions.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

On pasture, native or naturalized pasture, hayland, wildlife land, recreation land, and watershed protection lands where removal, reduction, or manipulation of woody (non-herbaceous) plants is desired.

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes

Brush management will be designed to achieve the desired plant community in woody plant species composition, structure, density, canopy (or foliar) cover, or height.

Brush management will be applied in a manner to achieve the desired control of the target woody species and protection of desired species. This will be accomplished by mechanical, chemical, biological methods alone, or a combination of these methods.

Prescribed Grazing (528), shall be applied before and after planned treatment to ensure desired results are achieved.

Additional Criteria for Improving Wildlife Habitat

Brush management will be planned and applied in a manner to meet the habitat requirements of the wildlife species of concern.

Brush management will be planned and applied in a manner that it will not adversely affect threatened or endangered species or their habitats.

Additional Criteria for Reducing Wildfire Hazards

Control undesirable woody plants in a manner that creates the desired plant community which produces the desired fuel load conditions.

CONSIDERATIONS

Timing and sequence of brush management in a pasture, hayland, wildlife areas and/or entire operating units should be planned in coordination with the prescribed grazing plan.

Consider soil erosion potential and difficulty of vegetation establishment when choosing a method of control that causes soil disturbance.

Some brush management activities can be effective when applied within a single year; others may require multiple years of treatment to achieve desired objectives.

Cultural resources will be considered when planning this practice. When this practice results in ground disturbance cultural resource protection will be incorporated into practice design in a technically sound manner. Mitigate or re-plan if necessary.

Consult with a biologist to assess impacts to wildlife species when planning block treatments. In general, treatments that create a mosaic are more desirable.

Treatments need to be congruent with dynamics of the ecological site(s) and are keyed to states and plant community phases that have the potential and capability to support the planned plant community.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Plans and specifications for the treatment option selected by the decision maker will be prepared for each pasture, field, or management unit where Brush Management will be applied.

Prepare a brush management specification that will conform to all applicable federal, state, and local laws. These documents will contain the following data as a minimum.

1. Goals and objectives clearly stated.

2. Brush canopy and/or species count, transect line locations and percent canopy and/or species numbers per acre of the target plant(s). Include the pre-treatment cover or density and the planned post-treatment cover or density and desired efficacy.

3. Maps, drawings, and/or narratives detailing areas to be treated, pattern of treatment (if applicable), and areas to be left undisturbed.

4. A monitoring plan that identifies what will be measured (including timing and frequency) and will document the changes in the plant community (compare with objectives).

For mechanical treatment methods:

Plans and specifications will include the types of equipment and any modifications necessary to enable the equipment to adequately complete the job. Also included should be:

- Dates of treatment
- Operating instructions
- Techniques or procedures to be followed
- Follow-up management or other treatments necessary to achieve objectives

For chemical treatment methods:

Plans and specifications will include:

- Herbicide name
- Rate of application or spray volumes
- Acceptable dates of application
- Mixing instructions (if applicable)
- Any special application techniques, timing considerations or other factors that must be considered to ensure the safest, most effective application of the herbicide
- Reference to label instructions
- Documentation of the use of environmental risk analysis tools (such as WIN-PST Soil Pesticide Interaction Loss Potential and Hazard Rating Report) in formulating alternatives with the client.
- Follow-up management or other treatments necessary to achieve objectives

For biological treatment methods

Plans and specifications will include:

- Kind of biological agent or grazing animal to be used
- Timing, duration, and intensity of grazing or browsing.
- Desired degree of grazing or browsing use for effective control of targeted species.
- Maximum allowable degree of use on desirable non-target species.
- Special precautions or requirements when using insects or plants as control agents
- Follow-up management or other treatments necessary to achieve objectives

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Operation: Brush Management practices shall be applied using approved materials and procedures. Operations will comply with all local, state, and federal laws and ordinances.

Success of the practice shall be determined by evaluating regrowth or reoccurrence of target species after sufficient time has passed to monitor the situation and gather reliable data. Evaluation periods will depend on the methods and materials used.

Maintenance:

Following initial application, some regrowth, resprouting, or reoccurrence of brush should be expected. Spot treatment of individual plants or areas needing retreatment should be done as needed.